

RECLAMATION AND DEVELOPMENT AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES GRANT PROGRAM



September
2019

2019 Biennium and Program Close-out Report

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Introduction

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) are organisms that are brought into Montana from other places. These include non-native clams, fish, mussels, plants, weeds, and disease-causing pathogens. AIS can overwhelm lakes and rivers, kill fish and plants, and damage the delicate ecosystem that keeps our waters clean and abundant.

AIS harm recreational and agricultural resources by damaging boats and gear, clogging water pipes and hydropower facilities, causing ecological damage to fragile aquatic ecosystems, obstructing community water sources, and choking off irrigation systems.

Prevention, early detection, and education are the best strategies to combat AIS. The State of Montana has expanded AIS management efforts over the last several years and has implemented a multi-faceted program. As part of that strategy, DNRC provides grants to help local communities prevent and control AIS in their areas, allowing communities to take an active role in AIS efforts in the state. The goal of the grants is to protect the natural resources of Montana from severe and unacceptable damage from AIS.

DNRC has managed the state AIS grant program since 2011 with funding provided through HB7 as part of the Reclamation and Development Grants Program (RDGP). AIS projects were eligible for RDGP funding under the category of meeting other state crucial state needs, defined as:

- protect Montana's environment
- serve the public interest and total environment of Montana

The Legislature has allocated between \$400,000-\$525,000 for AIS grants since the 2011 session as follows:

Biennium	Allocation
2019	\$500,000
2017	\$500,000
2015	\$525,000
2013	\$400,000
	\$1,925,000

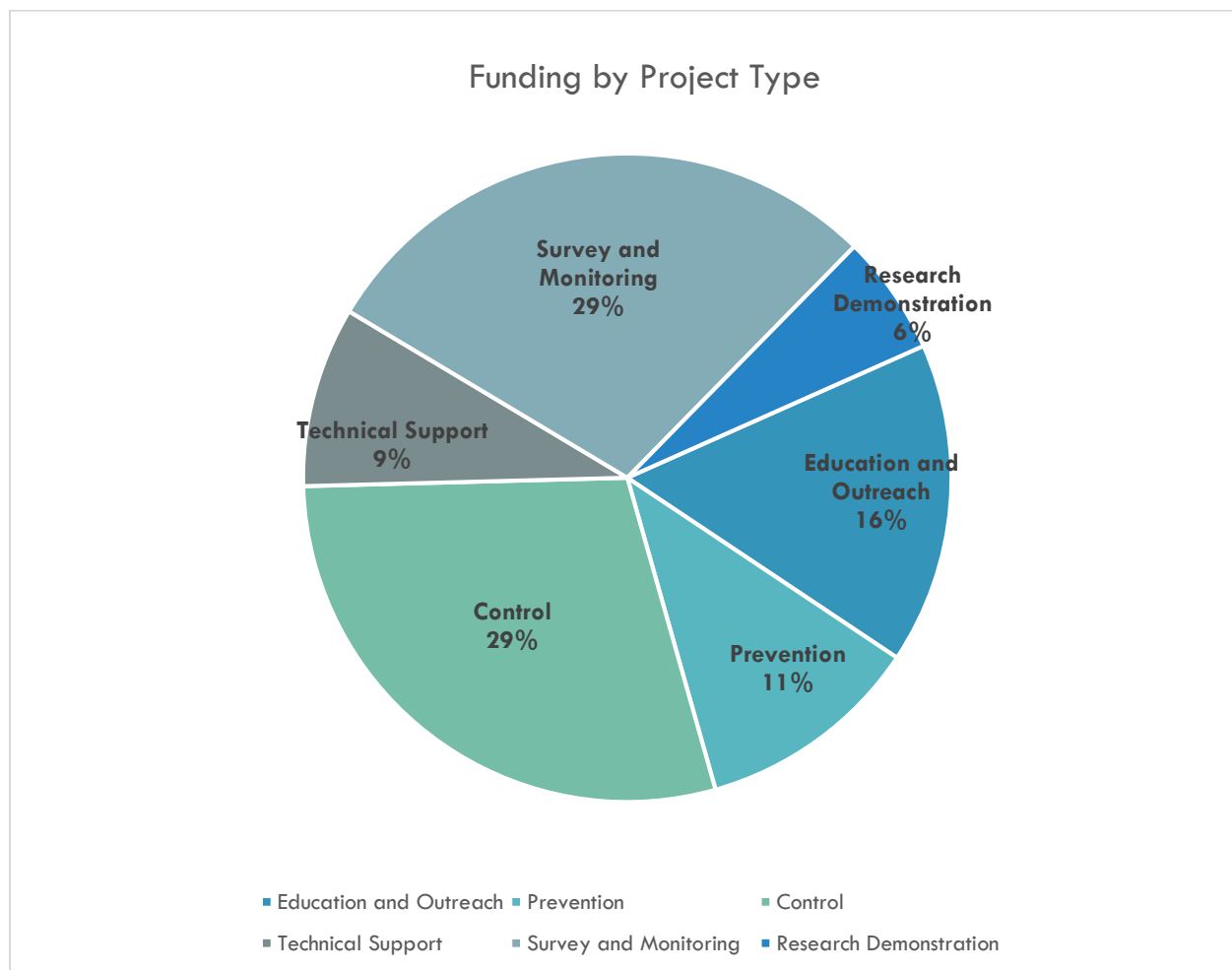
DNRC has worked closely with the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) who manages AIS statewide. DNRC's grants have supported FWP's AIS management efforts and local community efforts by providing technical support and financial resources.

In the 2019 Legislature, funding for the program was appropriated through HB 411 shifting it from HB 7 to the invasive species account in MCA 80-7-1017. The program is currently being redesigned and the Montana Invasive Species Council will advise DNRC on grant awards. This final report provides an overview of the program, reports on 2019 biennium grants, and closes-out the program as it shifts to a new funding source.

Program Overview

The purpose of the AIS grant program has been to help local communities prevent and control AIS in their areas, allowing people and communities to take an active role in AIS efforts in the state. The goal of the grants is to protect the natural resources of Montana from severe and unacceptable damage from AIS. Through the grant program, DNRC has funded activities such as on-the-ground treatment, education and outreach, surveys and monitoring, treatment demonstration, response measures, and other AIS activities.

Preference has been given to projects that address priority waters, as well as on-the-ground activities, such as surveys and removal that result in measurable control of AIS. Priority species include Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra and quagga mussels, flowering rush, and curly-leaf pondweed. Since the grant program's inception, funds have been allocated as follows:



DNRC has held a grant cycle each spring in anticipation of the upcoming field season. Additional cycles were announced throughout the year as funding became available in the Natural Resources Project Account. Eligible applicants include state and local governmental entities and tribal governments.

The ranking criteria for AIS grants followed RDG criteria, which is in statute (MCA 90-2-11) and administrative rule (ARM 36.19.201). Scoring criteria included:

- Alignment with high-priority AIS needs and species
- Project need, benefit to natural resources, and severity of the problem
- Quality of work plan and timeline
- Financial feasibility
- Project support and coordination
- Project management capabilities and likelihood of success

DNRC staff along with subject matter experts from FWP, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Agriculture, and technical experts as needed have served as primary reviewers for the grants. The review teams rank the projects based on the criteria. Funding recommendations were provided to the DNRC Director for final approval.

In total, DNRC has awarded 104 grants totaling just under \$2 million dollars. These grants were matched with an additional \$3 million from federal, state, local and private sources. Reports for each project plus awards and program reports can be found using the following links:

Program reports and awards: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/aquatic-invasive-species>

Project reports: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/resource-development/aquatic-invasive-species/ais-funded-projects>

Grants have been awarded across the state implementing AIS projects in local communities statewide (see map Appendix A). Grants awarded for the last biennium are listed below.

2019 Biennium Awards

Project Sponsor	Project Title	Award
University of Montana	Drafting the Test Plant List and Field Release Petition	\$15,000.00
Missoula County Weed District	Blackfoot, Clearwater Swan Aquatic Invasive Species Cooperative Project	\$13,833.00
University of Montana	Montana Natural Heritage Program	\$64,173.00
Salish Kootenai College	Dry Ground Applications and Monitoring	\$15,000.00
Petroleum County Conservation District	Invasive Mussel Response Education and Outreach	\$14,055.00
Garfield Conservation District	Conservation District and Watershed Group Support for Aquatic Invasive Species Projects	\$26,600.00
Missoula County Weed District	Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Planning and Education/Outreach	\$20,800.00

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Whitefish County Water District	Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Station	\$15,000.00
Sanders County	Management of Invasive Milfoil at Noxon/Cabinet Gorge	\$15,000.00
Broadwater Conservation District	Education and Outreach Design of Educational Trailer/Monitoring	\$14,960.00
University of Montana	Monitor Invasive Mussels on Flathead Lake	\$15,000.00
Missoula County Weed District	Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aquatic Invasive Species Education and Outreach	\$8,000.00
Missoula County Weed District	Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Monitoring	\$12,000.00
Marion Elementary School District	Aquatic Invasive Species Education/Outreach/Monitoring of Little Bitterroot Lake	\$10,000.00
Rosebud Conservation District	Yellowstone River Basin Mussel Response	\$15,000.00
University of Montana/Flathead Lake Biological Station	Aquatic Invasive Species for K-12 Community	\$10,999.00
University of Montana/Flathead Lake Biological Station	Detection/Monitoring Flathead Lake Plankton Tow Technique	\$11,717.00
Missoula Co Weed District	Blackfoot, Clearwater Swan Aquatic Invasive Species Coop Project	\$15,000.00
Salish Kootenai College	Flathead Lake Flowering Rush Controls Project	\$43,005.00
Whitefish Co Water District	Whitefish Prevention and Decontamination Station Upgrade	\$ 7,500.00
Flathead Basin Commission	Prevention Outreach and Training on Zebra/Quagga Mussels	\$5,000.00
Gallatin Co Weed District	Promoting "CLEAN,DRAIN,DRY" in Gallatin County	\$18,390.00
Lewis And Clark Conservation District	Teacher Workshops to Train Montana Educators on Aquatic Invasive Species	\$15,000.00
Ruby Valley Conservation District	Installation of Boot Cleaning Stations/Prevention of Aquatic Invasive Species	\$15,000.00
Sanders County	Management of Invasive Milfoil at Noxon/Cabinet Gorge Reservoirs	\$15,000.00
Stillwater Conservation District	Develop, Update, and Production of Aquatic Invasive Species Components for Education and Outreach	\$20,000.00
Lower Musselshell Conservation District	Invasive Mussel Prevention in Central Montana	\$19,525.00
University of Montana Natural Heritage Program	Information Management to Support Control of Invasive Species	\$31,359.00
Invasive Species Action Network	Technical Support	\$882.50

*Award amounts may not be fully expended by grantees.

Summary

AIS pose an ongoing and increasingly imminent threat to Montana. Adverse environmental effects, economic impacts, and public health issues are at stake in the fight against AIS. The AIS Grant Program under RDG and the new program funded through the invasive species account (80-7-1017, MCA) has and will continue to support local communities by providing grants to prevent the introduction of AIS, respond to detections of AIS, and control populations of established AIS in Montana.

APPENDIX A

Funded RDG AIS Grant Projects

